

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2011, a bill to designate the Federal building and United States Courthouse in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, as the "George Howard, Jr. Federal Building and United States Courthouse".

Judge George Howard, Jr. was born in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, on May 13, 1924. He began his service to our Nation at the age of 18 when he was drafted into military service during World War II. Judge Howard served with distinction in the United States Navy with the Construction Battalion—or the "Seabees"—in the South Pacific.

After completing his military service, Judge George Howard, Jr. returned to Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and re-enrolled in high school to complete his high school education. Upon graduating from high school, Judge Howard attended the pre-law program at Lincoln University in Missouri and graduated with honors. Judge Howard subsequently attended the University of Arkansas School of Law. He was the first African-American student to live on campus in the newly desegregated campus dormitories. He earned his law degree in 1954.

After graduating from law school, Judge Howard began a long, illustrious, and trailblazing legal career in his home State of Arkansas. In the 1950s, Judge Howard started a private law practice and devoted his energies to representing those whose voices would not otherwise be heard. He subsequently served on the Arkansas State Claims Commission, the Arkansas Court of Appeals, and the Arkansas Supreme Court. In 1980, President Carter appointed Judge Howard to the U.S. District Court, Eastern and Western Districts of Arkansas. Judge Howard was Arkansas' first African-American Federal judge.

Through his pursuit of legal and racial equality, and his exemplary career in public service, Judge Howard helped to pave the way for other African-Americans to pursue careers in law and public service. From his time as a private attorney, to his service as President of the State Council of Branches of the National Association of Colored People, NAACP, Judge Brown's judicial ideals were grounded in the fundamental belief of justice for all.

Judge Howard passed away on April 21, 2007, in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, at the age of 82. In honor of Judge George Howard, Jr.'s outstanding contributions to the State of Arkansas, the Federal judiciary, and his distinguished legal career, it is both fitting and proper to designate the courthouse located at in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, the "George Howard, Jr. Federal Building and United States Courthouse".

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 2011.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2011.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DISCHARGE AND REREFERRAL OF H.R. 123, SAN GABRIEL BASIN RESTORATION FUND AUTHORIZATION ACT

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 123) to authorize appropriations for the San Gabriel Basin Restoration Fund and that the bill be rereferred to the Committee on Natural Resources.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia? There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on H. Res. 505.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia? There was no objection.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE REGARDING THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF PRIME MINISTER TONY BLAIR

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 416) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the public service of Tony Blair, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 416

Whereas Tony Blair has served as the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom for more than a decade, winning three general elections as leader of the Labour Party;

Whereas Mr. Blair played an instrumental role in achieving peace in Northern Ireland and negotiating the Good Friday Agreement which brought all communities into the political and governmental process and ended centuries of division, conflict, and strife;

Whereas Mr. Blair committed himself to bringing devolved government to Northern Ireland which was achieved with the recent decision of the Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Féin agreeing to form a power-sharing government;

Whereas the United Kingdom and the United States have had a long-standing alliance which was further strengthened during Tony Blair's tenure as he and the United Kingdom stood side-by-side with the United States during conflicts in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq;

Whereas Mr. Blair showed British solidarity with the United States after the 9/11 terrorist attacks by being the first foreign leader to visit Ground Zero and attending President Bush's speech before a joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001;

Whereas Mr. Blair displayed exemplary leadership as Prime Minister when the United Kingdom suffered its own terrorist attacks on July 7, 2005, when suicide bombers killed 52 people traveling on London's public transportation system;

Whereas the United Kingdom has been a steadfast ally to the United States in the Global War on Terror as it is the second largest contributor of coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

Whereas on July 17, 2003, Mr. Blair was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal that declared "Congress finds that Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom has clearly demonstrated, during a very trying and historic time for our two countries, that he is a staunch and steadfast ally of the United States of America." Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the remarkable public service of Tony Blair during his tenure as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom; and

(2) expresses appreciation to Mr. Blair for his steadfast support for the United States and Britain's invaluable alliance to our Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of this resolution. As one of the co-Chairs of the bipartisan United Kingdom Caucus, I am honored to have the opportunity to speak in support of H. Res. 416, a resolution saluting the public service of Tony Blair, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

I would first like to commend our distinguished colleague, Mr. PETER KING of New York, for introducing this timely resolution that pays tribute to the remarkable political career of one of America's strongest allies.

Two days from now, Prime Minister Tony Blair will leave 10 Downing Street for the last time. He will be leaving behind a legacy of domestic reform and international activism. His successor, Gordon Brown, praised his accomplishments and told him that "Whatever we achieve in the future will be because we are standing on your shoulders."

Mr. Blair was first elected to Parliament in 1983 and served as Prime Minister for over a decade, securing a place in the record books as the only Labor leader to have won three successive elections.

Mr. Blair has been a strong and steadfast ally of the United States throughout his time in office. No American will ever forget the solidarity he expressed on behalf of our British cousins in the days following the devastating terrorist attacks of